

ABSTRACT

RESEARCH PAPER: Two Dialects One Region: A Sociolinguistic Approach to

Dialects as Identity Markers

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Communities with different regional and dialect backgrounds come in contact in newly settled areas but maintain their respective dialects and these dialects become strong identity markers for them. The paper focuses on the differences in lexical, phonological and morpho-syntactic features of two adjacent villages (A & B) in Punjab, Pakistan.

These villages are situated in District Sahiwal of Pakistani Punjab. People living in Village A belong to the Christian community who settled in the present village in early 1920s. These people come from different districts of north-eastern Punjab. People in Village B are Muslims and migrated from district Kasur and its surrounding areas to the present location in the early decades of 20th century.

This study is the first of its kind and can be used as a pilot for the future studies of dialect surveys in the district and province. The goal of this project is to describe the most salient differences between the two dialects. I hypothesize that after one hundred years of

living in the same area and in close proximity, villages A & B still use very distinct features of speech which are related to their original dialects and *bradaries* ‘tribes’. It will provide some very useful information about the dialects spoken in both the speech communities.

Differences in the use of specific linguistic features were analyzed from unstructured conversations from both the villages. Three age groups from each village were recorded with each group consisting of 3-4 men. The presence of differences at the lexical, phonological and morpho-syntactic levels in each dialect was described. Differences at phonological, lexical and morpho-syntactic level were salient in the speech of both the communities.